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ABSTRACT

Intended for school counselors, occupational specialists, and other guidance personnel, this handbook provides basic information and lists of resources concerning the career guidance needs of mentally retarded students. Chapter 1 reviews the aspects of career guidance that the counselor must provide: assessment, individual counseling, career planning, and career placement. The next two chapters describe the major classification systems for mentally retarded students and list characteristics of retarded students. Chapter 4 focuses on a comprehensive psychoeducational assessment of mentally retarded students, including assessment of intellectual abilities, academic achievement, and social functioning. The chapter on counseling mentally retarded students addresses selecting an appropriate counseling approach and family involvement. Chapter 6 briefly summarizes several laws affecting career planning for retarded people. Chapter 7 on career planning discusses development of employability skills, development of career/vocational vocabulary, and measures of vocational interests. Vocational placement is considered in chapter 8. Work evaluation systems frequently used with retarded students are described. Chapter 9 is an annotated listing of directories of services and materials, professional and service organizations, career education handbooks, and journals that can be used as resources. A bibliography concludes the handbook. (YLB)

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SUCCESS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Sources to Upgrade Career Counseling and Employment of Special Students

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SUCCESS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Sources to Upgrade Career Counseling
and Employment of Special Students

Project Director: Judy H. Lombana, University of North Florida

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, state and federal legislation has mandated equal educational opportunities for handicapped students. As a result, thousands of students with various disabilities are being provided opportunities to stretch their horizons through academic competition, social interaction, and personal growth within the mainstream of public education.

Although opportunities in education and employment have undoubtedly increased in the past several years, handicapped people remain severely underemployed and undereducated in comparison with the general population. Handicapped students are not being provided the career education they need at the elementary and secondary levels. Consequently, the vast majority of these students complete school without the needed skills—vocational, personal, and social—to participate productively in society.

The responsibility for many aspects of students' career education has fallen to school counselors. Unfortunately, most counselors have had little or no training or experience in working with handicapped students. Although they are willing, many counselors feel unsure of where to begin.

The SUCCESS Project—Sources to Upgrade the Career Counseling and Employment of Special Students—is designed to provide school counselors, occupational specialists, and other guidance personnel with basic information and listings of resources concerning the career guidance needs of handicapped students. This handbook addresses the special needs of mentally retarded students.

CHAPTER 1

THE COUNSELOR AND MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Until a few years ago, school counselors had virtually no contact with mentally retarded students and were, in fact, frequently discouraged from counseling any students who deviated from the norm. Career planning and preparation, when accomplished at all, were considered the responsibility of sheltered workshops, social service agencies, and state hospitals.

The passage of numerous state and federal laws and the advocacy of parent groups throughout the nation have brought increased attention to the needs and abilities of mentally retarded students. With the implementation of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, thousands of retarded students have entered the mainstream of public education. By law, handicapped students are to be provided *all* the services of an educational system, including career guidance.

Counselors are learning that providing career guidance to mentally retarded students is somewhat more complex than working with "average" youngsters. Most counselors have little understanding of mental retardation: its definitions, causes, or accompanying physical, mental, and emotional characteristics. A basic framework must be obtained before counselors can be expected to assist retarded students with their vocational needs. A knowledge of the various laws concerning retarded people is essential, since so many pieces of legislation affect the types of training available to these students and create legal mandates for educational institutions and employers.

Assessment plays a major role in the career guidance of retarded students, perhaps more so than with any other handicapped group. Complex intellectual measures are generally the primary means of screening mentally retarded people and predicting their educational and vocational futures. Counselors must be knowledgeable of these assessment devices in order to better understand the student, communicate with other professionals, interpret the student's behavior to parents, and defend the student's strengths and abilities to potential employers.

Individual counseling is usually considered an integral aspect of career guidance. Counseling with retarded students is both similar to and different from counseling with other individuals. Retarded students, like all people, have fears, hopes, dreams, problems, and expectations that sometimes call for one-to-one or group counseling. Contrary to a popular misconception, most retarded individuals experience as wide a range of emotions as other people. Counseling can be an extremely effective tool in helping a retarded person realize his or her vocational and educational potential and cope with the prejudices and misconceptions of society. Understanding is a universal need.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the process of counseling with retarded students, as well as the issues involved in counseling, may differ from those associated with counseling other students. More

than most students, retarded students need to develop certain skills that many people take for granted. They must learn appropriate social behavior, for instance, in order to successfully maneuver through the mainstream of society. In helping retarded students, school counselors are often required to take a more active and directive role than they are usually taught to take. Counseling may sometimes very closely parallel teaching, and emphasis may need to be placed on concrete methodologies such as behavior modification, modeling, and role-playing.

Because most retarded students have had little experience with the world of work, much of career planning and placement will need to focus on the practice of specific employability skills such as interviewing. Additionally, counselors will need to be familiar with the local job market. Direct contact with employers is often necessary in order to break down the barriers of distrust and prejudice.

Finally, career guidance of retarded students involves the effective use of a wide variety of material resources. A wealth of information, including books, films, and organizational activities, has been developed during the past several years. The counselor who is able to steer students, parents, employers, or other school staff to appropriate resources will be providing a useful and welcome service.

Vocational guidance of retarded students, then, includes a number of diverse activities, all designed to lead to a successful level of employability for each student. The objectives associated with such a vocational guidance program are depicted in the following chart.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE OBJECTIVES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Personal/Social Factors	Vocational Factors
Adjustability—The willingness to pursue and *accept* certain avenues and the ability to *adjust* to changing situations within many different environments (home, work, etc.)	*Placeability*—The possession of job-seeking skills that enable the individual to obtain gainful employment
EMPLOYABILITY	
Socialability—The possession of knowledge and skills that enable the individual to perform adequately in intra-/interpersonal relationships	*Workability*—The possession of vocational knowledge and skills that enable the individual to perform adequately within a work setting

CHAPTER 2

THE CLASSIFICATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

The most appropriate and universally accepted definition of mental retardation comes from the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD). Its essential components include:

- subaverage general intellectual functioning (empirically measured at least two standard deviations below the mean on a standardized individual intelligence test), with . . .
- deficits in adaptive behavior (relative to chronological age and environmental demands) that were . . .
- manifested during the developmental period (conception to 18 years of age) and that . . .
- adversely affect the individual's educational performance.

All four of these components must be measurably present in order for the existence of mental retardation to be confirmed. Extreme caution must be exercised, because an inaccurate label may severely damage a person's entire personal, social, educational, and vocational future.

The differences between mental retardation and mental illness should be clearly delineated. Mental illness is defined as the inability to adjust to or cope with personality and behavioral problems. This condition may manifest itself at any time in a person's life. Mental retardation, on the other hand, relates to limited intellectual development. Although both conditions may be present in one person, their origins—and appropriate counseling strategies—are different.

Along with efforts to define mental retardation accurately, professionals have attempted to develop an acceptable classification system. Obviously, no one classification method can satisfy all professionals. Therefore, several such systems have emerged, each designed to fit the varying purposes of the medical, legal, and educational communities. The major classification systems are:

- test-score classification
- medical classification
- educational classification
- behavioral classification

One universal purpose is apparent in all of these classification systems. They are not designed merely to label retarded people, but to facilitate the accurate selection and implementation of appropriate programs and services and help them attain an optimum level of functioning within the limitations of their physical and intellectual capabilities.

The *test-score classification* system is based on the results of a standardized intelligence test, usually the WISC-R or the Stanford-Binet. The numerical expression of test performance is used to indicate academic achievement, legal classification, the need for institutional placement, or the type of rehabilitation services needed.

The *AAMD's medical classification* system, which is used primarily by physicians, is based on the origin of the condition. This method includes the following categories of causes (examples are presented in parentheses):

- infections and intoxications (congenital rubella, Rh blood incompatibility, meningitis, intoxicants)
- trauma or physical agents (maternal injury, birth injury, postnatal brain trauma)
- metabolic or nutritional factors (phenylketonuria [PKU], hypoglycemia, Tay-Sachs disease)
- gross postnatal brain disease (Sturge-Weber-Dimitri's disease, tuberous sclerosis)
- unknown prenatal influences (microcephaly, hydrocephalus)
- genetic/chromosomal abnormalities (Down's syndrome, Klinefelter's syndrome, Turner's syndrome)
- gestational disorders (prematurity, anoxia)
- environmental influences (cultural deprivation, inadequate sensory stimulation)
- other conditions

Despite the wide variety of possible causes, the actual source of mental retardation is most often clinically unmeasurable and, therefore, not definitively identifiable. Statistics show that in over 75 percent of cases, symptoms occur *after* the active phase of the disorder has ended. In numerous other cases, the brain is damaged without any apparent cause.

The *educational classification* system is used by educators to indicate a student's learning potential. Its three categories are as follows:

1. *Educable mentally retarded (EMR) students* have an approximate IQ of 50–70; are expected to achieve academic work to at least the third-grade level and perhaps the sixth; are capable of learning unskilled or semiskilled work; and are expected to be socially adequate as adults.
2. *Trainable mentally retarded (TMR) students* have an approximate IQ of 25–49; are not expected to achieve functional academic levels but may achieve academic work to the second-grade level; can be trained mostly in self-care and social adjustment skills; and, as adults, are capable of working only in sheltered workshop conditions with constant supervision.
3. *Profoundly mentally retarded (PMR) students* are those whose IQs are below 25; they may profit from some training, mostly in self-care and self-help skills, and they may require constant nursing or supervisory care.

The *AAMD's behavioral classification* system is based on a retarded person's abilities to function independently and to adjust to the demands of his or her environment. Descriptors of these abilities are used in the following areas:

- activities of daily living
- communication
- physical
- social
- economic activity
- occupation
- self-direction

The following table shows the relationship between IQ test scores and empirically based descriptors, as well as the percentage of retarded persons in each category.

EMPIRICALLY BASED DESCRIPTORS

IQ Test Scores		*Levels of Retardation*		*Percentage of Retarded Persons*
WISC-R (s.d. = ± 15)	*Stanford-Binet Test* (s.d. = ± 16)	*AAMD Descriptors*	*Educational Descriptors*	
70–85	68–83	Borderline	Educable	89
55–69	52–67	Mild		
40–54	36–51	Moderate	Trainable	6
25–39	21–35	Severe		3.5
0–24	0–20	Profound	Profound	1.5

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

The relationship between mental retardation and personality characteristics has yet to be determined. Some experts maintain that retarded people are very similar to other individuals in characteristics such as honesty, kindness, happiness, and friendliness. Other studies, however, have found significant differences in several dimensions. These differences are particularly likely to manifest themselves during adolescence. Retarded adolescents often have trouble comprehending the physical and emotional changes that occur during this period, and they sometimes respond by exhibiting a marked degree of helplessness. Several research efforts (among them, Calhoun and Elliott, 1977) have revealed that the more that retarded people are treated as "normal," the more "normal" they behave.

Myths and stereotypical opinions significantly affect the personality development of retarded people. Among the prevailing myths that are particularly harmful are the following:

- All retarded people are alike, not only in the causes and symptoms of their conditions but also in their levels of functioning.
- All retarded people have anatomical as well as mental defects and are, therefore, subhuman.
- Retardation is a disease and may be contagious.
- Retarded people should be pitied, because their condition is hopeless.
- All retarded people are better off in institutions.
- Retarded people are unable to learn and cannot be trained to do meaningful tasks.
- Retarded people are hyperactive, impulsive, and uncooperative.
- Retarded children grow up to be childlike adults who, because of their untrustworthiness and irresponsibility, do not deserve the same rights as "normal" adults.
- Retarded people are more likely to become aggressive, dangerous criminals who are real menaces to society and should be institutionalized.
- Retarded people should openly disclose their condition to the general public.
- Retarded people will always be an economic burden on society.
- Retarded adults have a more potent sex drive than "normal" adults and are, therefore, more likely to become sexually delinquent.
- Retarded people can be trained to do only repetitive tasks.
- Retarded people are really mentally ill.
- Retarded people have no meaningful thoughts or feelings.

Any attempt to characterize certain behaviors as representative of retarded people is an oversimplification of a complex issue. The following characteristics may, however, help provide an appropriate framework for understanding retarded students, provided that counselors keep in mind the great variations that occur among individuals.

Physical Development

- may vary from slightly below average (weight or height) to delayed overall development
- may have moderate physiological defects, especially of vision and hearing
- may be less robust and tend to fatigue easily
- tendency in many to be overweight
- may be prone to illness and disease
- lowered ability in sensorimotor areas (e.g., gross and fine motor skills)
- language and speech development delayed to poor

Educational/Learning Characteristics

- variable educability, from third- to sixth-grade competence for EMR students to a peak potential at second grade for TMR students
- variable rate or degree of learning
- primary educational focus on basic literacy, intra-interpersonal/social skill development, self-care and job-related training
- inefficient thought processes—inability to see relationships between cause and effect, between goals and means to attainment
- delayed and/or retarded language development
- inability to grasp abstractions and concepts
- short attention span and hyperactive tendencies
- poor memory and lack of ability to profit from experience
- perseveration, which may take the form of unacceptable or eccentric habits
- inability to generalize information to other situations
- may initially show a low level of performance associated with a generalized "failure expectancy"
- may show resistance to following directions
- inability to perceive stimuli accurately and relate them in a meaningful way, which may result in rigid or bizarre organization of perceptual stimuli (e.g., whole-part concept problems, left-right discrimination problems)

Social Expectations and Psychological Adjustment

- delayed general social and emotional development
- range of potential for social development from well-adjusted social competence and independence to a childlike need for almost total supervision and care
- may have limited mobility around the community
- may exhibit poor social judgment and little social awareness
- weak decision-making and problem-solving skills
- social rejection by peers and others may result in lowered self-concept or antisocial behavior (e.g., anxiety, hostility, withdrawal
- may interact poorly because of tendency toward egocentricity and rigidity in treatment of others

- may feel a sense of helplessness and anomie—tendency toward periods of self-devaluation
- low tolerance for frustration
- may need guidance and assistance when under unusual social or economic stress
- may exhibit immature behavior, odd mannerisms, or inappropriate interpersonal manners

Vocational Characteristics

- range of vocational potential from skilled to semiskilled to unskilled
- life style and occupational choice probably shaped by need to survive—economic self-sufficiency difficult
- limited motivation to enter work force—lack of competitive spirit
- inability to focus on realistic career goals—limited awareness of career alternatives
- limited ability to transfer training to other job-related enterprises
- limited social skills may influence employability
- range of employment sites from those in the community to those in more controlled working environments, such as sheltered workshops or residential centers
- need for supervision may limit employability

One difficulty in describing the characteristics associated with mental retardation is the focus on negative traits. It is vital that counselors remember:

- There are vast differences among people who are mentally retarded, just as there are among the rest of the population; every student needs and deserves to be treated as an individual.
- Although a few severely retarded people need institutional care, the vast majority of retarded individuals are able to live successfully within their communities.

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSMENT OF MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Assessment is a complex process, one that employs a myriad of diverse techniques and should occur over a significant period of time. Within a comprehensive vocational planning program, assessment is facilitated by the systematic, progressive use of both formal and informal measures and by the inclusion of reevaluation as an integral aspect of the process. The chart on page 12 illustrates the various elements of a comprehensive vocational assessment program for mentally retarded students.

Since a complete analysis of assessment procedures and instruments is beyond the scope of this book, discussion is restricted to formal measures used with high-school-aged students. Measures of vocational interest are covered in chapter 7, and tests of vocational skill (work samples) are included in chapter 8.

A comprehensive psychoeducational assessment is a prerequisite to the development of appropriate vocational preparation plans for mentally retarded students. The first step of such a plan should be an interdisciplinary exploration of the student's—and, in some cases, the family's—needs, abilities, interests, attitudes, expectations, resources, and limitations. These are the primary areas that affect mentally retarded students in their employment and community-living endeavors.

The second step requires that the results of Step 1 be used to formulate an individualized plan. The focus of the plan will depend on the reasons that the assessment process was initiated (e.g., Does the student require further treatment, remediation, education, or training?). This second step clearly delineates what should be the primary underlying function of assessment—the making of accurate decisions.

Accurate assessment is no simple matter, and even under the most ideal circumstances it may be particularly difficult with mentally retarded students. Therefore, it is imperative that the counselor be aware not only of the intent and purpose of the instrument but also of any problems that may arise during the testing process itself.

Some of the problems that occur most often in the assessment of retarded students include:

Student limitations, such as

- low reading level or inability to read
- short attention and interest spans
- difficulty in following instructions
- generalized failure expectancy
- lack of abstractive power
- questionable comprehension levels
- limited experience
- low frustration tolerance
- concomitant physical handicaps (e.g., vision, hearing)
- language deficits
- low vocabulary level
- limited motivation

COMPONENTS WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR USE WITH MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

PRESCHOOL PHASE I

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

Medical-psychological assessment for purpose of diagnosis/identification—included are measures of intelligence, personality, social functioning, physical fitness, and achievement

PRIMARY PHASE II

PREVOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Reevaluation of diagnosis relative to educational training and placement

Reevaluation of diagnosis relative to vocational training and placement

Educationally based assessment of various knowledge and skills

a. **basic prerequisite academic skills** (e.g., reading, language arts, mathematics)

b. **social skills** (e.g., communication, interpersonal relationships, responsibility)

c. **personal skills** (e.g., independence, assertiveness, self-confidence)

d. **daily living skills** (e.g., personal routines, room management, personal hygiene)

e. **perceptual motor skills** (e.g., organic strength, endurance, general coordination, speed, agility)

f. **basic prevocational knowledge**

Reevaluation of diagnosis relative to educational training and placement

SECONDARY PHASE III

VOCATIONAL PHASE

Experientially based assessment

a. **vocational education training assessment**—to obtain information concerning specific vocational areas and tasks that may be appropriate

b. **assessment of actual work-study/training experience and job-related skills** (e.g., community mobility, economic efficiency)

c. **assessment of formal pre- and post-placement procedures** (e.g., job-seeking and job-securing skills, work habits, work performance skills)

Reevaluation of the individual's knowledge and skills with emphasis on work potential (e.g., independence and adjustment, personal/social skills; budgeting, purchasing, health care and nutrition, managing a home; attitudes, interests, personal traits, habits; achievement, work-sample performances

Reevaluation of diagnosis relative to vocational training and placement

NOTE: This ongoing approximation of an individual's strengths and weaknesses relies heavily on the test-train-test approach.

- poor physical health
- anxiety and poor self-concept

Test limitations, such as

- inapplicable standardization procedures
- time restraints
- cultural bias of content

Test administrators' limitations, such as

- unreasonable expectations
- inconsistent or unclear manner of administration
- inability to encourage optimum student performance
- inability to establish rapport

It may be necessary to modify assessment instruments for certain students. Possible modifications include instruction, time limits, scheduling, emphasis on rapport-building and reinforcement, and individual rather than group administration. In all such cases, additional caution must be exercised in interpreting the results.

By the time mentally retarded students reach the secondary level, most have been tested to determine their skill levels in numerous areas. As students become more actively involved in the career planning process, certain types of assessment may need to be repeated. Secondary and vocational counselors will need to be knowledgeable of the various tests discussed in the following sections.

Assessment of Intellectual Abilities

The primary purpose of intellectual assessment is to measure a student's current abilities and limitations. This type of measurement is very important with retarded students, because delayed maturation and growth patterns may produce drastic IQ changes in the late teens and early twenties.

Accurate intellectual assessment also allows for classification into special programs, helps determine appropriate instructional techniques, and measures learning in social education components.

The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children--Revised (WISC—R), for ages 5-15, and *The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale--Revised* (WAIS—R), for ages 16 and over (Psychological Corp.; 757 3rd Ave.; New York, NY 10017), are individually administered examinations designed to assess a person's capacity to understand. Each is composed of two subscales: verbal (six subtests) and performance (five subtests). Mentally retarded students usually perform better on the performance section of the test than on the verbal section.

Results are reported as a verbal IQ, a performance IQ, and a full-scale IQ. The counselor should closely examine subtest scores for indications of specific strengths and weaknesses that can be used for vocational planning.

The minimum mental age of approximately 5 to 6 years on both these tests may limit their usefulness to older students who are mildly to moderately retarded. They are, however, considered more appropriate for retarded adolescents and adults than other tests, because they seem to provide the best measurement of the type of intellectual skills needed for vocational and community functioning.

The Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT), for ages 2 years and over (Slosson Educational Publications, Inc.; 140 Pine St.; East Aurora, NY 14052), is an individual intelligence test derived in part from the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale—Third Revision and the Gesell Developmental Schedules. The SIT is designed to provide preliminary screening information quickly. When used for this purpose, it may be helpful in selecting students for a more comprehensive assessment; however, it should not be used in a situation where important diagnostic decisions are required.

Testing and scoring take from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on how quickly the basal level (10 consecutive passes before the first error) and the ceiling level, or termination point (10 consecutive errors or passes), are reached. No time limits are imposed.

Scoring is objective and can easily be accomplished during testing without loss of rapport.

Item content focuses on mathematical reasoning, vocabulary, auditory memory, and general information. All questions are presented verbally and require spoken responses. This heavy emphasis on language skills may present some difficulties for students with delayed language development.

Assessment of Academic Achievement

Exploration of a mentally retarded student's academic abilities is useful to reveal academic levels, to plan remedial instruction, and to evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum.

Tests frequently used with mentally retarded students include the following:

The Wide Range Achievement Tests (WRAT)—Revised Edition (Psychological Corp.; 575 3rd Ave.; New York, NY 10017) measure an individual student's achievement in spelling, arithmetic, and reading. The WRAT consists of two levels, one for ages 5 to 11 and the other for ages 12 to adult (or college level). The WRAT is a timed (20 to 30 minutes) and speeded test. Results in each of the three skill areas are reported as standard scores, grade equivalents, or percentile norm ranges.

The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills, grades K-6, and *The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills,* grades 2-12 (Albert H. Brigance; Curriculum Associates, Inc.; 6 Henshaw St.; Woburn, MA 01801), are individual, criterion-referenced achievement tests that measure a student's current academic skills and capacities. The key subject areas examined on both tests include readiness (developmental skills), reading, language arts, and mathematics.

The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills also measures applied skill areas such as travel and transportation, oral communications and telephone skills, money and finance, and health and safety. In addition, it includes a vocational section with subtests and rating scales for assessing skills related to successful employment.

The alternative testing procedures presented with the Brigance instruments allow for flexible administration. Suggested time limits are given, but actual testing time is left to the examiner's discretion.

Scoring is easily accomplished in a Grade-Level Profile Booklet. Since the results are given in performance terms, they are easy to interpret to parents and to other educators.

Assessment of Social Functioning

Measures of social functioning include tests of personality and of adaptive behavior/social skills. Characteristics frequently covered in the assessment of social functioning are frustration behavior, emotional disturbance, degree of self-regard, motivational level, interpersonal relationships, care of personal needs, self-expression, personal appearance, independence, and family relationships. Frequently used tests include the following:

The Draw-A-Person Test (DAP), for ages 5 and over (Western Psychological Services; 12035 Wilshire Blvd.; Los Angeles, CA 90025), is a projective personality measure that is a useful adjunct to any test battery. It furnishes information on a person's interests, needs, tensions, environmental influences, personal relationships, emotional adjustment, self-image, and self-regard.

Administration requires that the student draw a person; directions may be pantomimed. When the initial drawing is completed, the student is instructed to draw a person of the opposite sex and then to tell a story about each picture. Scoring is based on style, detail, emphasis, and other characteristics of the drawings; esthetic qualities are not considered.

The Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test, for ages 4 and older (Lauretta Bender, American Orthopsychiatric Association, Inc.; 1775 Broadway; New York, NY 10019), is primarily used to assess an individual's visual-motor development. It may also be employed as a projective personality measure.

The test consists of nine designs on separate cards, which are exposed one at a time. The student is asked to copy each design on a sheet of paper. No time limit is imposed. Directions may be pantomimed, but the student must have adequate motor functioning to complete the items.

The examiner notes the position of the paper and other factors while the individual is drawing the designs. The drawings are also judged in terms of distortion, rotation, perseveration, and so forth.

The AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale—1975 Revision, for all ages, and *The AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale, Public School Version*—1974 Revision, for ages 7 to 13 or grades 2-6 (American Association on Mental Deficiency; 5101 Wisconsin Ave. NW; Washington, DC 20016), are behavior rating scales designed for use with mentally retarded and emotionally maladjusted children and adults. They can be very useful as diagnostic-prescriptive instruments.

The current version of the *AAMD-AB Scale* consists of 110 items that describe skills and habits essential in maintaining personal independence in daily living and in fulfilling social expectations.

Part One, which is organized along developmental lines, explores 10 domains pertaining to independent-functioning skills. Part Two consists of 14 domains; it is designed to measure maladaptive

behavior relative to personality or behavior disorders.

The *Public School Version* is a modified form of the *AAMD-AB Scale*. Items that do not pertain to school have been eliminated, reducing the total number of items to 95.

Administration and scoring are easily done on both scales. Results may be placed on an individual Profile Summary Sheet for easy administration.

The Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS)—1965 Revision, for ages infancy to adult (Edgar Doll; American Guidance Service; Publisher's Building; Circle Pines, MN 55014), is a developmental schedule that provides a detailed list of performances in terms of social competence and social independence.

This individual Binet-type scale consists of 117 items. It is administered by the interview method and is untimed, although 20 to 30 minutes is all that is usually necessary.

Information for scoring items should be obtained from a person who is closely familiar with the individual, such as a parent or teacher. The total score can easily be converted into a social age and a social quotient.

The VSMS can be very useful in identifying areas needing special assistance and indicating a student's learning readiness.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that no one test or group of tests can give an infallible picture of a mentally retarded person. A variety of assessment techniques should be used in an ongoing, test-train-test vocational program.

An additional technique that is more and more finding its way into assessment programs for this special population is the behavioral checklist. It can provide useful information about all areas of a person's life, especially his or her vocational development.

Finally, when dealing with these special needs students, as with any group of individuals, the counselor must remember that processes are more important than products, individuals are more important than groups, and today and tomorrow are more important than yesterday.

CHAPTER 5
COUNSELING MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

Traditionally, counseling with mentally retarded students has received little attention. Theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners have tended to ignore this special needs group or to argue against the feasibility of these students' benefiting from counseling. Moreover, this unfortunate professional stance has done much to prolong one of the most common myths about mentally retarded people—that they do not have the same emotional needs and reactions as people with more highly developed intellectual capacities.

Although their personality development may be somewhat slower, retarded individuals experience the same range and variety of emotions as persons with normal intelligence. They feel the same need for a sense of fulfillment and for a favorable self-image. Similarly, the most frequent cause of behavioral problems is one shared by mentally retarded people and their "normal" peers: an imbalance between a person's abilities and the demands of his or her environment.

The only deviation from the affective norm appears to be the greater prevalence of behavioral difficulties found with mentally retarded populations. Research studies suggest, however, that these disturbances are not primary components of retardation but secondary by-products of limited intellectual abilities (i.e., understanding and perceptions of problems may be less clear).

Mentally retarded students usually experience the same social and emotional difficulties as other students, including sibling rivalry, the onset of puberty, parental pressures, and peer conflicts. Retarded students, however, have less personal insight to cope with these problems. Moreover, they bring to the counseling situation certain limitations that must be considered, such as the following:

- *Physiological Limitations.* Certain characteristics may arise from the physiological conditions underlying the retardation. A brain-damaged student may be hyperactive, for example, or a student with Down's syndrome may be particularly docile.
- *Intellectual Limitations.* To vary counseling techniques appropriately, the counselor will need to know to what extent the retarded student is able to function independently, whether the student is aware of his or her strengths and weaknesses, and what the prognosis is for the student's education, training, and independent living.
- *Communication Limitations.* Mentally retarded individuals commonly suffer from deficient conceptual and organizational language skills. Many have trouble comprehending abstractions, as well as interpreting and adequately expressing information. Consequently, retarded counselees may tend to be concrete, inflexible, and very here-and-now oriented. This does *not,* however, mean that they cannot understand and communicate their thoughts and feelings. It merely indicates that the lower an individual's ability to communicate effectively, the less successful introspective counseling is likely to be.

- *Learning Factors.* Many mentally retarded individuals are very other-/outer-oriented and may respond best to concrete environmental clues for confirmation and approval. If their ability to retain information is weak, large amounts of overlearning may be necessary. Also, since most retarded students have experienced more failures than "normal" individuals, they may require a more friendly, tolerant, and supportive learning environment.
- *Parental Influences.* Mentally retarded children and youth often develop very strong emotional ties to their parents and family, with the result that the parents may inadvertently become powerful positive or negative reinforcers. Also, the parents' attitudes, values, beliefs, motivations, and tensions are readily reflected in their child's behavior. The counselor must fully understand these motivating factors, as well as the parents' covert and overt reactions to the student and to his or her disability.
- *Socioeconomic Factors.* Research shows that a large majority of mentally retarded students come from the disadvantaged classes. Consequently, their attitudes, values, and beliefs may vary considerably from those of middle-class counselors.
- *Social/Emotional Limitations.* Because their social and emotional development is delayed, mentally retarded individuals often display immature behavior and poor social judgment, which can lead to rejection by other people. When exposed to such negative experiences, retarded people often succumb to feelings of inferiority and worthlessness. Their depressed self-concepts are further reinforced by failures in personal, social, educational, and vocational endeavors.

Because of these kinds of limitations, many retarded students do not learn how to adjust to the environment and reach personal goals. Once again, the counselor must learn to interact with each student as an *individual,* since the level of retardation, environmental factors, and other elements greatly affect the counseling process.

Selecting an Appropriate Counseling Approach

Until recent years, the counseling approaches most often used with mentally retarded people were the conventional one-to-one, verbally oriented types. These approaches depend primarily on the individual's ability to conceptualize and hypothesize about his or her problems. Mentally retarded clients have generally been unresponsive to counselors who have pursued these traditional methodologies. These approaches can be effectively modified to produce positive outcomes, however. The following section discusses some important considerations in the selection of an appropriate counseling modality.

First and foremost, counselors who work with any population, especially mentally retarded people, should not rely exclusively on any single counseling technique. Appropriate techniques to be employed can best be determined in terms of the following criteria: counselor skills and experience; counselee skills; present and future counselee

needs; counselee problem areas; and counseling goals. Additionally, research has shown that a more flexible, eclectic orientation, one that encompasses any technique the counselor deems appropriate, assures more effective results with mentally retarded students.

Regardless of the modality selected, the counseling process can be divided into three stages. The first is the facilitative stage. Early counseling efforts should be designed to promote an accepting counselor-counselee relationship. Emphasis is on building self-confidence and establishing trust in the counselor. A positive, supporting, trusting relationship is especially crucial to retarded individuals, who usually have a long history of failure and rejection. This stage is relatively unstructured.

The second stage is the problem-oriented stage. The focus of this stage is twofold: the continued enhancement of a positive self-concept and the delineation of the counselee's problems. This stage, which is usually more structured, includes the use of various strategies.

The third stage is the problem-resolution stage. It too has more structure and includes strategies that will further aid the counselee in the resolution of his or her present difficulties. Moreover, emphasis is also on the learning of "preventive maintenance" skills.

With most mentally retarded students, both individual and group counseling approaches are applicable. Each approach offers the opportunity for retarded students to achieve a greater awareness and acceptance of their inherent potentials.

Individual counseling provides retarded students with an avenue of release frequently closed to them because of negative attitudes toward their deficient verbal abilities. For this reason alone, it is often the most effective therapeutic tool. Additionally, a reality-centered combination of directive, client-centered, and behavioristic counselor orientations has been found to be very successful. Of course, the emphasis placed on each technique depends on the counselee and his or her problems.

Before using individual counseling, however, the counselor should ascertain whether the following conditions are present:

- Is the counselee competent and productive with the format of a highly verbal counseling interchange?
- Can the counselor adapt his or her skills to the counselee's limited cognitive abilities?
- Can the counselee's problems best be handled by the one-to-one approach?
- Do both the counselee and the counselor have the time and resources to maintain the long-term relationship individual counseling often requires?

Group counseling has been found to be an extremely effective social-adaptation tool with retarded people. It provides a nonthreatening forum for reality testing by allowing individuals to examine their responses to others; their attitudes, values, and beliefs in relation to others'; others' reactions to their behavior; and others' experiences and aspirations.

As with all adolescents, peer-group pressures and fear of rejection

from peers are important influences in both the learning of new behaviors and the extinction of maladaptive behaviors. Furthermore, group counseling provides some degree of "belongingness" to its members. This in itself may be a new and positive experience for mentally retarded students who have lived with rejection and exclusion.

A more directive approach has been found to be more successful with this population. The use of nonverbal, activity-oriented strategies serves to provide structure in a variety of ways. The counselor must be aware, however, that group dynamics may not move in desired or appropriate directions. If the counselor does not trust the growth potential of the group, or fears loss of group control, group counseling may not be a wise choice.

The following suggested guidelines address the issues of the composition, size, and duration of the group.

- The group should be homogeneous in terms of such factors as background, chronological age, degree of emotional maladjustment, and IQ levels (students with IQs below 55 should probably not be included).
- Members' personalities should be heterogeneous, to provide a balance of temperaments and behavioral characteristics.
- Social and emotional maturity levels may vary, but some sufficiently mature members will be needed to ensure group stability.
- Research has found that a sex ratio that is nearly equal, with a slight preponderance of females, seems to be advantageous. If this is not possible, then it is best to have separate same-sex groups.
- Studies show that the optimum size for groups of retarded students is between four and six members.
- Frequent, brief sessions are recommended. Research suggests that groups should meet for a *total* of at least one hour each week.

A wide variety of counseling strategies and activities have been used either alone or with individual or group counseling approaches. Among those that have met with a fair measure of success are behavior modification techniques; role playing or sociodrama; play therapy; and specialized techniques (e.g., the use of music and art).

Behavior modification techniques are derived primarily from operant conditioning models. The focus is on identifying specific behaviorally defined problems and ways in which the individual may modify his or her behavior and environment so that s(he) may solve these problems and therefore function more efficiently. This systematic application of learning principles would include such procedures as modeling, shaping, and prompting. The successful use of these strategies, especially with the mentally retarded, depends on the careful selection of reinforcers. Also, with this group, behavior change must be undertaken in small, consistently progressive steps.

Role playing, or sociodrama, is an extremely flexible counseling strategy. It may be used not only with a variety of personal and

social problems but in many different settings, such as classrooms and sheltered workshops.

The functional values of role playing include the following:

- It provides an opportunity for the counselor to assess, in real-life situations, the mentally retarded student's strengths and weaknesses in intra- and interpersonal relationships.
- It allows the students to become more sensitive to their own behaviors through a careful examination of the roles enacted.
- It provides a protected environment in which students may explore possible solutions to their intra- and interpersonal problems.

The opportunity to act out problems and unfulfilled hopes can do much to free mentally retarded students from a stagnant existence.

Play therapy techniques can be very facilitative, even for secondary-level mentally retarded students. Much can be learned about a student's behavioral strengths and weaknesses by engaging him or her in a selected play activity or game and then observing interactions with playmates and materials.

The value of play therapy is also seen when the retarded individual uses it as a means for letting off steam. The counselor can control the emotional catharsis by carefully structuring the task or game. Initially, simplified instructions and materials are recommended. Gradually increasing the game's complexity will more closely approximate the real world.

For the mentally retarded student, play also provides the opportunity to experience success in an activity to which s(he) attaches great importance. Furthermore, it is a less stressful means of communication because it places less importance on verbal skills.

Specialized techniques center primarily on the therapeutic use of the creative arts. These techniques are especially useful with the mentally retarded because they allow for nonverbal communication through the use of an interesting and pleasurable activity. Artistic expression through painting, drawing, dancing, or listening to music can bring out a retarded individual's aggressions, fears, and conflicts.

Family Involvement

One of the most important factors influencing emotional and social adjustment is family dynamics. Research has demonstrated that the foundations of self-respect are built on good family relations. The presence of a retarded child has profound effects on a family's interactional and organizational patterns. The parents' attitudes toward the child and his or her disability also have definite effects on the child's mental health. All of these factors should be considered by the counselor.

If the family of a mentally retarded person is fairly stable, they should be included in the counseling process. Generally speaking, the aim of this cooperative relationship is to support the family members in gaining strength to assume responsibility for their actions and decisions and to plan *together* for realistic courses of action that will lead to a happier and more meaningful existence for all of them.

In conclusion, probably no aspect of a mentally retarded student's education is more important than that which concerns itself with the student's personal, social, and occupational adjustment and satisfaction. Many retarded adults fail to achieve successful vocational adjustment, *not* because of intellectual limitations or lack of job skills, but because of personal and social deficiencies. Therefore, personal and social training is perhaps even more appropriate for these students than academic achievement. Counseling is an integral aspect of such training.

CHAPTER 6

CAREER EDUCATION LEGISLATION FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

The basic human rights of mentally retarded persons are being increasingly recognized and accepted. An important first step was the 1971 United Nations' "Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons," which supported their rights to education, economic security, appropriate living accommodations, and protection from "environmental abuse" in whatever form.

There has been a growing urgency in the struggle for an appropriate education and equal vocational opportunities for handicapped people. This urgency is documented by the increasing number of state and federal laws passed in the last decade.

This chapter briefly summarizes several of the most important laws affecting career planning for retarded people.

Public Law 93-112, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, established vocational rehabilitation programs funded jointly by state and federal governments. These programs assist handicapped people in entering or returning to the employment mainstream. Additionally, the law authorized the expenditure of research and demonstration funds in an effort to discover and use new concepts and devices useful to handicapped individuals. *Section 502* was created to ensure compliance with the barrier-free standards required by Public Law 90-480 (Architectural Barriers Act of 1968); *Section 503* mandated equal employment opportunities under federal contracts; and *Section 504* established the right to nondiscriminatory employment.

Public Law 93-380, the Education Amendments of 1974, provided federal funds in support of state efforts to establish full educational programs for handicapped children and to actively locate, identify, and evaluate all handicapped children. *Section 406* of this legislation made career education a law of the land by creating and funding the United States Office of Career Education.

Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, established the federal government's commitment to a full and free appropriate public education for all handicapped children (ages 3 through 21 years). This law clearly defines the rights of the individual in its delineation of all evaluation, placement, and implementation procedures.

Public Law 94-482, Title I of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, provided across-the-board federal assistance for vocational education of handicapped students, especially program development, program implementation, and counseling. As in Public Law 94-142, this law mandates that each program must meet the unique training needs of disabled recipients.

Public Law 95-207, the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act of 1977, designated approximately $400 million to be spent over five years in an effort to implant career education in school curricula, provide funds for guidance and related activities, and develop and implement more professional inservice training programs.

An important coalition of ideas and goals occurred in October 1977, between the Rehabilitation Services Administration (a federal rehabilitation agency) and the U.S. Office of Education. The commissioners of these offices issued a "memorandum of understanding" clearly expressing the agencies' mutual recognition of many common responsibilities to various handicapped populations. Additionally, the memorandum reiterated the agencies' obligations to provide services to handicapped individuals eligible under Public Laws 94-142, 94-482, and 93-112. This action was especially notable because it was the first effort at coordinated interagency service delivery.

The following are among the other laws that have affected retarded people's rights to educational and vocational opportunities.

Civil Rights

- *The U.S. Constitution*—especially amendments 5 and 15 (due process provisions), 6 and 8 (judicial rights of the handicapped offender), 13 (against peonage), and 15 (right to non-discriminatory voting)
- *The State of Florida Bill of Rights of Retarded Persons* enacted in 1975 to further define and protect already existing legal and human rights of the mentally retarded (Chapter 75-259, Florida Statutes, Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 815)

Rehabilitation/Developmental Disabilities Services

- *Public Law 91-517,* the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Amendments of 1970
- *Public Law 93-516,* Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, 1974
- *Public Law 94-103,* Developmental Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1975
- *Public Law 95-602,* Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Act of 1978

Appropriate Housing and Income Support/Aid to the Disabled

- Funding allotments for handicapped individuals who are eligible and in need may be found in *Public Laws 94-566, 94-365, 94-569, 94-585, 94-401,* and *93-647,* Social Security Act/Supplemental Security Income Amendments.
- Funding allotments for appropriate housing arrangements may be found in *Public Law 90-448,* Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, and *Public Law 94-375,* Housing Authorization Act of 1976, Section 8.

Child Abuse

- *Public Law 93-247,* Child Abuse and Treatment Act of 1974
- *Public Law 93-644,* Child Abuse and Treatment Act of 1975

Readers can request copies of federal bills, reports, hearing records, or other congressional documents from their members of Congress:

- U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
- U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515

If the supply is sufficient, free copies of legislation can be obtained from:

- Document Room, U.S. House of Representatives, Room H-222, Capitol, Washington, DC 20515
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Send the law number and a self-addressed envelope or gummed label.

Laws can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

CHAPTER 7

CAREER PLANNING FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

A common misconception concerning mentally retarded workers is that their employment opportunities are severely limited because of their low intellectual abilities. A number of studies, however, have found that intelligence is not the most significant factor in employability. Failure to obtain or maintain appropriate employment is most frequently related to personality factors and the inability to adjust to the job situation. More specifically, reasons often cited for the failure of retarded people to maintain employment include:

- excessive absences and poor habits of punctuality
- poor attitudes toward work
- sloppy or incomplete work
- poor manners
- poor personal appearance
- inability to get along with fellow employees
- leaving work without notification
- lack of job responsibility
- impulsive behavior

Several other studies have examined the factors that appear to be most involved with retarded workers who have achieved notable vocational success. A recent study by Foss and Peterson (1981) cited the following behaviors as most important:

- following supervisor instructions
- responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction
- refraining from exhibiting bizarre or irritating behavior
- working independently of direct supervision
- maintaining an appropriate personal appearance
- interacting appropriately with co-workers while on the job
- controlling aggressive behavior
- requesting assistance as needed

In addition to job skills, employers expect certain abilities during the interviewing process. Smith (1981) found that employers are willing to hire retarded people and consider them potentially capable in many areas of work. Employers are not generally willing to relax job-related requirements, however, and insist that retarded people be able to perform such tasks as completing job applications and to act in socially appropriate ways.

In view of these findings, an important task of the counselor working with mentally retarded students is to help them develop certain basic social skills. In recent years, a number of employability skills programs have been designed for use with retarded students, most of which have used a hands-on approach to skill training. In one program (Hall et al., 1980) a group of retarded adults were taught how to introduce themselves, how to complete standard job application forms, and how to ask and respond to questions appropriately. The authors combined brief lectures, modeling, role playing, and constructive feedback as teaching techniques. They found that the clients made significant gains in all areas through the use of a systematic

approach. The authors suggest that it is important to teach skills in small increments, moving from the specific to the general. Appropriate greeting skills, for example, might include components such as eye contact, smiling, posture, handshaking, and spoken greetings. The counselor might begin by commenting on the importance of greeting skills, then talk about eye contact. After explaining the term, the counselor could demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate eye contact and then role-play with each student in turn. Only after students have demonstrated the ability to use correct eye contact through several consecutive role plays should the counselor move to the next skill. Some counselors find it helpful to record student progress on a checksheet such as the following one.

Name_____

S: satisfactory
N: needs improvement
U: unsatisfactory

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CHECKSHEET
GREETING SKILLS

	Pretest	Trial 1	Trial 2	Trial 3
Eye Contact				
Smiling				
Posture				
Handshaking				
Initial Greeting				
Greeting Response				
All Greeting Skills				

After each component of appropriate greeting is mastered, the counselor could engage the student in several different role plays to ascertain that s(he) is able to maintain the various components while practicing a more general task. With more severely retarded students, it may be necessary to break down individual skill components even further. Thus, with some students, the subskill "handshaking" may need to be taught and evaluated as follows:

- Extend hand to interviewer's hand.
- Squeeze hand firmly.
- Let go of hand when interviewer does.

Responding to questions and being able to discuss basic aspects of work are important aspects of employability training. Since a common limitation of retarded people is vocabulary, in terms of both usage and comprehension, systematic instruction in this area may need to be included. A study conducted by Schilit and Caldwell (1980) isolated the 100 most essential career/vocational words. The following chart lists them in order of importance.

100 Most Essential Career/Vocational Words

1. rules
2. boss
3. emergency
4. danger
5. job
6. Social Security
7. first aid
8. help wanted
9. safety
10. warning
11. signature
12. time
13. attendance
14. absent
15. telephone
16. bill
17. hired
18. overtime
19. punch in
20. directions
21. paycheck
22. wages
23. appointment
24. income tax
25. interview
26. supervisor
27. vacation
28. apply
29. full time
30. income
31. quit
32. check
33. careful
34. dangerous
35. employee
36. layoff
37. take-home pay
38. unemployed
39. cost
40. deduction
41. fired
42. closed
43. part time
44. correct
45. foreman
46. time-and-a-half
47. worker
48. buy
49. raise
50. on-the-job
51. entrance
52. responsible
53. hospital
54. hourly rate
55. schedule
56. instructions
57. save
58. union
59. credit
60. elevator
61. punctuality
62. rights
63. hours
64. payroll
65. attitude
66. reliable
67. work
68. caution
69. license
70. poison
71. office
72. power
73. qualifications
74. earn
75. transportation
76. withholding
77. vote
78. break
79. cooperation
80. dependable
81. money
82. physical
83. hazardous
84. net income
85. strike
86. owner
87. repair
88. alarm
89. gross income
90. manager
91. reference
92. uniform
93. hard hat
94. authority
95. training
96. holiday
97. late
98. personal
99. tools
100. area

Other skills that are particularly important for retarded students preparing to enter the world of work include dress and grooming, completing application forms, and verbal interview behavior. Many retarded students are oblivious to the negative impact created by dirty hair, rumpled clothes, or poor personal hygiene. Fortunately, most people can be taught to correct unpleasant habits. Again, the most effective approach seems to be a combination of instruction, modeling, role playing, and feedback. Some researchers (e.g., Hall et al., 1980) have found that the use of a point economy is effective in improving performance more rapidly.

Unlike the average student, who learns about the world of work through after-school and summer jobs, mentally retarded students seldom experience such activities. Therefore, most have little or no firsthand experience from which to learn such concepts as independence, financial remuneration, job satisfaction, or employer-employee relationships. Retarded students desperately need job-related activities that can serve to increase their range of experiences, introduce them to the world of work, develop a sense of pride in accomplishment, and create the beginnings of a work identity. The creative counselor can undoubtedly devise a number of ways of providing such experiences. Examples of successful programs include the following:

- Project HELP (Handicapped Employability Learning Program) provides part-time employment in jobs such as kitchen helper, yardworker, and painter. While on the job, students receive training in skills such as punctuality and interpersonal skills. Employers complete evaluation forms that provide feedback on areas needing further work (Cooper, 1977).
- One in-school work experience (Berkman, 1974) involves a real commercial enterprise run by students. Various work stations are managed by adolescents, who help younger or less-able students accomplish specific tasks. The more capable students learn to fill out employment applications, maintain sales records, and handle money. The others are helped to identify coins, tell time, and understand basic measurement concepts.
- Programs such as the Houston Job Fair (Poor and Delaney, 1974) help to destroy barriers between handicapped students and employers. The Houston program brought 200 students and 60 employers together and served to increase student interest in vocational exploration as well as to provide practical experience in interviewing skills.

Determining vocational interest is an important component of any career planning program. Many popular vocational interest inventories are too sophisticated, in terms of content, concepts, and procedures, for retarded students. Several instruments that require little or no reading and that are easy to comprehend are available, however. As with all formal assessment devices, counselors must use these instruments with caution. Few have been standardized on retarded populations, and the simplicity of the instruments may indicate a lack of substance. Examples of low-verbal instruments include the following:

- *Picture Interest Exploration Survey* (PIES). The PIES is an easy-to-score kit that requires no reading or prior familiarity with the world of work. It is available from the Educational Achievement Corporation; P. O. Box 7310; Waco, TX 76710.
- *Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory.* This pictorial instrument requires a student to choose a preferred work situation from groups of three illustrations. The job areas were chosen from those in which mentally retarded individuals have demonstrated proficiency. It is available from the American Association on Mental Deficiency; 5101 Wisconsin Avenue NW; Washington, DC 20016.
- *Vocational Interest and Sophistication Instrument* (VISA). The VISA is a nonreading, pictorial inventory that was designed to measure the vocational interests of mildly retarded adolescents and adults. It is available from the Nisonger Center; Ohio State University; 1580 Cannon Drive; Columbus, OH 43210.
- *Wide-Range Interest-Opinion Test* (WRIOT). The WRIOT measures a large number of vocational interests. No reading other than the words *least* and *most* is required. Special instructions for severely handicapped people are provided. The test is available from Guidance Associates of Delaware; 1526 Gilpin Avenue; Wilmington, DE 19806.
- *Work Value Inventory.* This instrument is designed to assess work values concerning career choice and job satisfaction. The reading level is low, and the test requires only 20 minutes to complete. It is available from Houghton-Mifflin, Inc.; 2 Park Street; Boston, MA 02107.

CHAPTER 8

VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT OF MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS

In recent years, the professional view of the educational/vocational potential of retarded people has changed dramatically. It was once thought that few could perform any but the most routine tasks and that they could never be even partially self-supporting. Numerous success stories have changed such myopic opinions, and an increasing number of insightful employers and educators are working to increase the opportunities for retarded people to show their capabilities. Such potential is illustrated by a recent project (Brickey and Campbell, 1981) in which a group of retarded adults from a sheltered workshop were trained by McDonald's staff and worked in a variety of positions at the fast-food chain. A two-year follow-up found that the retarded workers had been assimilated into the operation, had been successful with many complex tasks, had developed great pride in their work, and experienced a much lower turnover rate than other McDonald's employees.

Bluhm (1979) reports that 75 percent of the retarded people over the age of 21 in the United States could be fully self-supporting. Yet retarded people still remain grossly underemployed. Many professionals attribute this problem to a lack of social and other employability skills, and counselors, teachers, and other school personnel do need to make efforts to develop these skills in retarded students. Personal-social skills represent only a portion of the problem, however. Because of the way that Social Security and disability laws are structured, individuals often *lose* money by accepting employment. In the McDonald's project, for example, it was found that the retarded people who proved to be the most stable workers were actually punished financially, because their government benefits were discontinued after nine months. Because the jobs paid only the minimum wage, the retarded workers lost more than $1,000 in income and other expenses over the course of one year.

Although many of the vocational problems experienced by mentally retarded workers are beyond the resources of school personnel, counselors and others can do much to help place students in appropriate employment.

One approach to job placement that has enjoyed remarkable success is the Job Club. The Job Club is an extensive behaviorally oriented, highly structured method of helping people become employed. The counselor's role is to give positive encouragement; to provide instruction and practice in interviewing and telephoning skills; to help clients identify sources of information and job leads; to provide necessary supplies (telephone, newspapers, etc.); and to be available for advice and support. The program is presented in a very practical format; a workbook, the *Job Club Manual,* details the counselor's role step by step. More than 30 pages of the manual are appendices and forms that can be reproduced by the counselor for use with groups of students. Although the Job Club was not

expressly designed for retarded students, it has been used successfully with them. Several studies (Azrin, Flores, and Kaplan, 1975; Azrin and Philip, 1979) have found the Job Club to be more successful than other approaches in terms of duration of job search, level of jobs obtained, salary, and reported job satisfaction. Ordering information is presented in chapter 9.

Another important way that counselors can help with the vocational placement of retarded students involves communicating with local agencies and employers. Some suggestions to help develop contacts include:

- Develop and disseminate a brochure to inform employers of federal regulations regarding employment of handicapped people. Materials should show the advantages of hiring retarded workers and describe the educational/vocational training programs the students are undergoing.
- Conduct a survey of community employers regarding job possibilities and concerns about hiring retarded workers.
- Arrange visits to local businesses and meet with the managers to discuss their needs and the value to the community of the employment of retarded workers (Foster, 1977).

One method of building relationships between the school and the business community is to conduct a community/school day. Employers and other representatives of the business community are invited to spend a day at the school, both to explain their businesses and to learn more about handicapped workers. Part of the program can focus on information. Some employers do not understand the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Others are misinformed concerning the effect of employing handicapped workers on Workers' Compensation premiums, accident rates, and related factors. This information needs to be presented by a highly credible person, preferably a respected business leader who has had personal experience in employing handicapped workers. Information alone is seldom thoroughly convincing. Employers must have an opportunity to be persuaded, through personal contact and experience, that retarded individuals can be competent workers. Sigler and Kokaska (1971) make some practical suggestions for initial employer contacts:

- Keep presentations brief and to the point.
- Speak in lay terms.
- Use factual information about the advantages of employing retarded workers.
- Use general questions ("Lovely day, isn't it?") to condition the employer to positive responses.
- Avoid sidetracking; avoid irrelevant questions by responding to them in conjunction with your next point.
- Anticipate possible objections and be prepared to counter them.
- When objections are based on misconceptions, correct the employer with honest and firm information.
- Present printed materials upon leaving, and follow up with a letter of appreciation.

In communicating with potential employers, it is important to be able to ensure that retarded students have demonstrated certain vocational skills. The work sample approach, although far from perfect, has proven to be an acceptable substitute for actual on-the-job skill demonstrations in some areas. The following are among the work evaluation systems frequently used with retarded students.

The Comprehensive Occupational Assessment and Training System (COATS) (PREP, Inc.; 1575 Parkway Ave.; Trenton, NJ 08628) is a comprehensive work sample system consisting of four major components—Living Skills, Work Samples, Job Matching System, and Employability Attitudes. The Work Samples component assesses individual interests, performance capabilities, and behaviors relative to various job situations (e.g., drafting, clerical/office, sales, and medical services). All 10 work samples are individualized, self-paced, and computer-scored. They are conveniently packaged for efficient storage and easy removal.

MICRO-TOWER: The Group Vocational Evaluation System (Institute for Crippled and Disabled/ICD Rehabilitation and Research Center; 340 East 24th St.; New York, NY 10010) is a system of 13 work samples for adolescents and adults with mild retardation (EMR) through the normal range. The primary purpose of the battery is to measure aptitudes needed in several unskilled and semiskilled jobs. Each work sample is patterned after a specific job task (e.g., bottle capping and packing, making change, message taking, ZIP coding, filing, and mail sorting). A cue-stop cassette tape unit presents the instructions, and a photo book visually illustrates related occupations and various steps within the sample.

MICRO-TOWER can be administered to small groups (5 or 6 members) in 3 to 5 days. A learning period is provided before actual testing, to ease anxiety and enhance performance. Individual feedback sessions and group discussions are encouraged as an integral part of the system.

The Singer Vocational Evaluation System (SVES) (Singer Education Division; 80 Commerce Drive; Rochester, NY 14623) measures vocational interests and aptitudes and work tolerances. The individualized system uses an audiovisual teaching machine to present programmed instruction on specific tasks in 17 occupational clusters (e.g., basic tools, bench assembly, electrical wiring, plumbing and pipe fitting, and masonry). Each of 17 work stations is equipped with a variety of industrial tools. All of the stations are self-contained and easily moved.

The SVES is completely controlled by the individual and thus self-paced. The trainee can evaluate his or her own interests and aptitudes in conjunction with periodic step-by-step evaluations by the examiner.

The Valpar Component Work Sample Series (Valpar Corp.; 655 N. Alvernon Way; Tucson, AZ 85716) consists of a series of 16 work samples (e.g., small tools, size discrimination, numerical sorting, clerical comprehension and aptitude, and integrated peer performance). These work samples are keyed to the Worker Trait arrangement in the DOT, and were developed to provide an insight into

many worker characteristics. Two weeks of examiner/evaluator training is recommended but not required.

Vocational Information and Education Work Samples (VIEWS) (Vocational Research Institute; Jewish Employment and Vocational Service; 1624 Locust St.; Philadelphia, PA 19103) was designed specifically for retarded individuals.

CHAPTER 9
RESOURCES

Printed materials and service organizations can be extremely helpful to counselors as they work with mentally retarded students and their parents and teachers. Professional associations and journals provide the counselor with up-to-date information about techniques and services for retarded individuals. Parents appreciate books and other resources that help them learn more about their child's disability and provide suggestions for support and treatment. Students can develop understanding and acceptance from films and books that portray mental disabilities realistically.

Directories of Services and Materials

Directory for Exceptional Children Porter Sargent Publications 11 Beacon Street Boston, MA 02108 1977	Lists and describes schools and treatment centers for children and young adults with many types of handicaps. It includes state, private, residential, and day programs.
Directory of National Information Sources on Handicapping Conditions and Related Services Superintendent of Documents U.S. Government Printing Office Washington, DC 20402 1976	Describes the activities and services of numerous national organizations and federal information sources regarding various handicapping conditions.
Directory of Organizations Interested in the Handicapped Committee for the Handicapped People-to-People Program 1028 Connecticut Avenue NW, #610 Washington, DC 20036 1976	Lists more than 100 national organizations concerned with training, treatment, devices, and procedures to assist handicapped people.
Yearbook of Special Education Marquis Academic Media 200 East Ohio Street Chicago, IL 60611	A potpourri of information gathered from many sources. Includes educational programs, legislation, state programs, and statistical information.

Professional and Service Organizations

American Academy on Mental Retardation
916 64th Avenue East
Tacoma, WA 98424

An organization composed of professionals engaged in research on retardation. Provides information to individuals or groups.

American Association for the Education of the Severely/ Profoundly Handicapped
1600 West Armory Way
Seattle, WA 98119

Functions as an advocate for the implementation of educational services for severely handicapped people from birth through adulthood. It also develops training materials for educators and serves as an information source in many areas, including employment.

American Association on Mental Deficiency
5101 Wisconsin Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

An organization composed of professionals in the field of mental retardation. Publishes the *American Journal on Mental Deficiency* and *Mental Retardation.* It developed the *Adaptive Behavior Scale,* an instrument widely used to determine the daily functioning ability of retarded people.

B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Service
1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

Maintains libraries throughout the country on careers and other topics of interest to disabled persons. Provides information, pamphlets, bibliographies, and other materials to professionals and lay persons.

Boy Scouts of America
Scouting for the Handicapped Division
U.S. Route 1 and 130
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

Organized to encourage the inclusion of handicapped boys in regular packs, troops, and posts. It also encourages the establishment of special packs, troops, and posts when necessary. Special leader's manuals on Scouting for mentally handicapped boys are available.

Closer Look: National Information Center for the Handicapped 1201 16th Street NW Washington, DC 20036	Offers advice regarding special services for handicapped children and youth; provides miscellaneous materials for parents; offers bibliographies on handicapping conditions for professionals; provides consultation, inservice training, and institutes for educators.
Council for Exceptional Children 1920 Association Drive Reston, VA 22091	A professional organization with state and local chapters and divisions concerned with specific handicapping conditions. Publishes a variety of educational materials; provides consultation, inservice training, and institutes for educators.
Curriculum Research and Development Center in Mental Retardation Yeshiva University 55 Fifth Avenue, Room 1409 New York, NY 10003	Develops curricula with particular emphasis on teaching social adaptation to mentally retarded children and youth.
Down's Syndrome Congress 118 Paloma Drive San Antonio, TX 78212	A group of parents and other persons whose goal is to keep professionals aware of current information on Down's syndrome. Has regional agencies and local chapters throughout the country.
Goodwill Industries of America 9200 Wisconsin Avenue Washington, DC 20014	Provides rehabilitation services, training, employment, and opportunities for personal growth for people who cannot compete in the general labor market. Locally, direct services include job testing and counseling, job training and placement, prevocational help, and sheltered employment.

Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
1701 K Street NW, Suite 205
Washington, DC 20006

A foundation started to prevent mental retardation by identifying its causes and to improve the lives of retarded citizens. It has established research and clinical centers at several universities and created and sponsors the Special Olympics program.

Mainstream, Inc.
1200 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

An organization formed to assist in the mainstreaming of disabled persons in education and employment. Organizes conferences, publishes a newsletter, and provides multimedia presentations to increase awareness of the needs and rights of handicapped people.

National Association for Retarded Citizens
2709 Avenue E East
Arlington, TX 76011

Works on the local, state, and national levels to provide help to individuals, parents, organizations, and communities. It provides information via newsletters, brochures, and referrals.

President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
Washington, DC 20210

Publishes and distributes information on vocational guidance, job placement, and other employment-related topics.

Career Education Handbooks

Azrin, N. H. and Besalel, V. B. *Job Club Counselor's Manual: A Behavioral Approach to Vocational Counseling*, 1979.
University Park Press
233 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

The *Job Club Manual* is a comprehensive guide for the counselor providing explicit information and instruction on topics such as scheduling meetings, contacting prospective members, outlining activities, and arranging interviews. Forty-six appendices are included, most of which are charts, forms, sample letters, and related materials.

Bailey, L. J., ed. *A Teacher's Handbook on Career Development for Students with Special Needs: Grades K-12,* 1977. Illinois Office of Education
Springfield, IL 62706

A practical curriculum guide designed to help educators infuse career education information into the academic curriculum. It contains much practical information on the career needs of students with various disabilities and includes excellent listings of sources for various types of assistance.

Hohenshil, T. H., and Mady-Bernstein, C. *Resource Guide: Vocational Counseling for the Handicapped*
Virginia Vocational Guidance Programs
College of Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Blacksburg, VA 24061

This inexpensive resource guide includes several hundred annotated listings of articles, books, audiovisual materials, staff training materials, and organizations concerned with career education of handicapped people.

Kowle, C. P., comp. *Job Placement and Adjustment of the Handicapped: An Annotated Bibliography,* 1979.
National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210

This bibliography includes descriptions of a wide variety of materials, including other bibliographies.

Vacc, N. A. *Handicapped Students: An Overview for Career Guidance Personnel.*
Career and Educational Consultants
P.O. Box 12492
Gainesville, FL 32604

An inservice training module, this manual gives school personnel in grades K-12 general information concerning various handicaps.

Journals

Career Development for Exceptional Individuals
Published semiannually by the Division on Career Development
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Career Education Quarterly
Published quarterly by the National Association for Career Education, Room 1502
Boston University
765 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

Disabled USA
Published monthly by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
Washington, DC 20210

Journal of Career Education
Published quarterly by the College of Education
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65201

Newsnotes
Published by the National Association of Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel
American Vocational Association
1510 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

Vocational Guidance Quarterly
Published quarterly by the National Vocational Guidance Association
Two Skyline Place, Suite 400
5203 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

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